UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Radio Service
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

Housekeepers' Chat Wed., Feb. 8/28

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "Mary Alice Entertains the Sewing Club." A luncheon menu de luxe, from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

When Mary Alice entertains the Neighborhood Sewing Club, you may be sure that every one of our six members makes it a point to be present. Mary Alice is famous for her company luncheons. They are never elaborate -- never formal. How could they be, when Mary Alice has a husband with a limited income, and half a dozen youngsters to keep track of? As Mary Alice says, hers is a great life, and full of thrills. She is an ideal hostess -- the sort of person you like to be with. Hospitality, some one has said, is only another variation of the art of being kind. Mary Alice is always kind.

To return to the company luncheon -- write it down, if you like: Waffles with Stewed Chicken, for the first two or three rounds, followed by Waffles with Sirup or Cinnamon-Sugar. (Cinnamon-Sugar, as the name implies, is sugar mixed with powdered cinnamon.) The rest of the menu included Celery Hearts and Olives, Coffee, Fruit Cup, and the Drop Cakes known as "Rocks".

Mary Alice planned this menu so that she might be with her friends as much as possible, and of course she wanted us to see the new electric waffle iron Bill gave her for Christmas.

She mixed the waffle batter before we came, and had it all ready to pour into a pitcher for use at the waffle iron. The stewed chicken she had also prepared ahead of time. It was ready to heat up again, and serve, when we arrived. Mary Alice has a particularly good way of cooking stewed chicken. She had bought a fowl well past the chicken stage, but it was tender as could be, when she served it. She had disjointed it in the usual way, rolled each piece in flour, and browned it in some of the chicken fat, which she had fried out in the skillet. Then she put the browned chicken into a kettle, covered it with water, added salt, put the lid on tight, and let the chicken simmer until the meat was easily stripped from the bones. When the meat was cool, she cut it into small pieces, and put it back into the broth. Just before serving, she thickened the gravy slightly, and added chopped parsley. No one who has ever eaten this Stewed Chicken of Mary Alice's, with her Hot Waffles, will ever forget either.

The Celery and Olives were of course prepared beforehand too, even to arranging on the serving dishes. They were set in the cold pantry to keep fresh and crisp. The Fruit Cup was also fixed in the dishes, ready for serving. The Fruit Cup was delicious. If I remember rightly, it included sliced oranges, and grapefruit, canned apricots, and raw apples, cut in very small pieces.

This luncheon was as easy on the hostess as any I've ever attended. The coffee was the only thing that Mary Alice had to make at the last minute, and the electric percolator did most of the work on that. Of course our hostess had to bake the waffles, but we could all see that she enjoyed it immensely.

I'll repeat Mary Alice's company luncheon menu, for the sake of those who came in late: Waffles with Stewed Chicken; Waffles with Sirup or Cinnamon-Sugar, Celery Hearts and Olives, Coffee, Fruit Cup, and Rocks.

The Rocks were made according to the recipe in the Radio Cookbook. I'll broadcast this recipe, for those of you who have not yet sent for your Radio Cookbooks. Nine ingredients, for Rocks:

1 1/2 cups light brown sugar
1 cup butter
3 eggs, well beaten
1/2 teaspoon soda in a little hot water
1 teaspoon cinnamon
3 cups raisins, chopped
1 cup English walnut meats, chopped
2 3/4 cups flour, and
1/2 teaspoon salt

Please check the nine ingredients, for Rocks, while I repeat them: (Repeat)

Cream the butter and sugar, and add the eggs. Sift the dry ingredients, reserving some flour to roll the raisins and nuts. Mix all together. Place by teaspoonfuls, on a greased pan, and bake in a hot oven. As flour varies so much, it would be wise to bake a sample, and if it runs, add from 1/8 to 1/4 cup more of flour. Sometimes, however, when drop cakes spread out too much in baking, the fault is that the oven is not hot enough, rather than that the mixture is too soft. Drop cakes need a rather hot oven, so that they will set quickly, and hold their shape. They also bake better on a baking sheet without high sides, or on an inverted pan.

For the next few minutes I'll answer questions.

First question: "Can you tell me now to machine stitch fine materials, such as georgette, so they won't pucker?"

Answer: Such fine materials as georgette, chiffon, and silk crepe will not pucker if they are stitched on strips of paper. Strips of ordinary newspaper are all right. Hold the paper under the material which is being stitched. The paper is easily pulled off, when the stitching is completed.

Question Number Two: "Is there any accurate way for the home dressmaker to mark her own hem line?"

Answer: The ideal hem line to mark, if you want your skirt to hand straight, is around the largest part of the hips. You can mark this line yourself if you will fasten a piece of soft chalk to the table top so that the end of the chalk extends beyond the table. Then turn about, and allow the chalk to mark the dress at the hip line. Perhaps I'd better explain this procedure a little more fully. Shave the chalk flat on two sides, and sharpen it at one end. Place it on a table, with the sharp edge of the chalk extending an inch or so. Place a heavy book on the chalk to hold it secure while you turn about, and thus mark the hip line on you skirt.

You can measure from the chalk line to the hem line. This is an accurate, easy way to mark a hem line. Don't forget that hems are much improved by pressing. Whether the hem is to be basted or not, both the first and second turnings should be pressed in with an iron.

The next question is getting to be a regular customer. "Please tell me," writes a housewife, "how to remove mildew stains from my best linen tablecloth."

Answer: If the stains are fresh, they may come out when washed with soap and water, and bleached in the sun. If the soap and water method does not take out the mildew, moisten the stains with lemon juice and salt and place in the sun.

Do you know what mildew is? You didn't ask that, but I know the answer, so I'm going to tell you. Mildew is a mold which grows on fabrics that remain damp for a time. The mold spots are often grayish-green, brown, or almost black. The mildew grows on the surface of the fabric at first. If allowed to grow, however, it attacks and destroys the fabric. Spots should therefore be treated when fresh. So have a care about letting clothes lie damp in the basket for several days awaiting the iron, or about putting damp things in the soiled clothes bag.

Next question: "Does the Bureau of Home Economics have a bulletin which would help a home dressmaker in fitting garments for herself?"

Answer: I am sending you a copy of the bulletin called "Fitting Dresses and Blouses." This book is a valuable addition to any sewing room. And don't forget about the new leaflet, on "Children's Rompers." Any clever mother can get excellent suggestions from this attractive illustrated leaflet.

Last question: "I would greatly appreciate some information about feeding market poultry. Can you give me some advice on this subject?"

Answer: Feeding chickens is not in my line, but I will send you a copy of the new bulletin on "Feeding Chickens," recently issued by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. All these bulletins I've mentioned today are free, and they contain the best of up-to-date information.